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THE RED CROSS AND EAST TIMOR

When I was released, I worked to Indonesian Red Cross as agent and translator of an Indonasian Red Cross branch called 'Tracing and Mailing Service'. My duty was to restore contact between the prisoners and their families through Red Cross message form. All the contents of the messages I had to translate into indonesian language and handed it to indonesian military security forces to check the contents, before I handed them to the destinataries. The indonesian military don't allow people to write in the Red Cross message form all sorts of news concerning deaths or sad news. Every time that the indonesian Red Cross or the International Red Cross employers intend to move out from Dili, I or other workmate have to ask a travel permission to the indonesian military secret service and we could only travel after getting their signatures. Every month we use to make reports of our activities to the Indonesian Red Cross head-quarters in Jakarta. Copies of these reports are required by the indonesian military secret service. I, myself use to hand these copies reports to them.

On 2nd day of January 1987 in Lospalos I was threatened by an indonesian lieutnent because I didn't want his soldiers to be held in a truck which was wearing the flag of Red Cross. The same event happened on the way from Same to Dili in January 1987. I was inside of an ICRC car with a nurse from the dellegation of ICRC. We were threatened by indonesian troops of being shot because we refused to carry soldiers in our car. In Lospalos I witnessed people being immediatly interrogated by indonesian troops after they had talk with the International Red Cross dellegates.

The timorese who were portuguese civil servants, one day before their departure to Portugal their luggages are checked by indonesian military secret service in the building of Indonesian Red Cross and all photos which there is militar equipements or troops are not allowed to take by the owners. I, myself took part in this checking, side by side with the indonesian military secret agents.

All those who were in the Ataúro concentration camp, Porogoa and Aileu are kept under surveillance once they return to their places of origin. They are also forced to carry out guard duties at the look-out posts for most of the day. For example, the people who returned to Lospalos from the Porogoa camp had to go and live with their relatives because their homes had been burned down at the time they were forced to leave for Ataúro. They are unable to get new houses set up because they have to spend their time doing guard duties and also because they are not authorized to travel further than 5 kms. In January 1987 two boys who had come from Lospalos accompanied me to the Turismo Hotel in Dili where some members of the International Red Cross delegation stay, in order to tell them about the situation and to ask for help. However, a nurse of the Delegation said that at that time they were unable to intervene because the kind of help the boys had requested did not fall within boundaries of the project that was underway. In returning to their native Ainaro the people who had been in the Ataúro concentration camp were forced to advance at the head of the Indonesian forces during operations carried out against the resistance. The International Red Cross is aware of these facts.

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José GUTERRES